



# TEXAS JUVENILE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT

TRANSFORMING YOUNG LIVES AND CREATING SAFER COMMUNITIES

## **Response to the Independent Ombudsman Second Quarter Report, FY 2016 April 15, 2016**

The Texas Juvenile Justice Department (TJJD) has received the FY 16 Second Quarter Report from the Office of the Independent Ombudsman (OIO). As always, TJJD appreciates the opportunity to respond.

As part of a shift to operate more preventively, TJJD and the OIO have begun standing monthly meetings which will be used not only to identify problematic issues, but also to better understand patterns and trends at diverse locations and system-wide. For example, the first quarter report identified 6 complaints related to rules/policies (including 3 from a state institution, 2 from halfway houses and 1 from contract care), and the second quarter report identified 3 complaints about rules/policies, which happened to come from the same state institution. TJJD would like to work with OIO to better understand to what extent the complaints stemmed from youth perceiving that staff don't follow rules/policies, or whether complaints stemmed from rules/policies the youth dislike or perceive as unfair. The second quarter report identified 7 complaints categorized as "Other." Upon inquiry, the OIO has responded with a listing of the "other" complaints that are useful in following up to identify high leverage activities which can help resolve conditions that lead to complaints. Some complaints will fall outside the scope of TJJD for resolution (e.g., this quarter's complaint from a youth on parole about his local school district), but the majority of issues should fall within TJJD influence, and collaboration with OIO will be helpful to strengthen a preventative approach to problems.

TJJD notes that during the second quarter one state institution, McLennan County, had 11 of its 13 registered complaints in categories where no other locations had complaints. Counts for this site include counts from the Phoenix Unit, a separate setting within the same complex. The data follows first quarter in which the same location had 6 registered complaints, more than any other location. During December 2015, staff in leadership positions participated in specially arranged management training with a highly regarded management trainer. The emphasis was on better working together as a team, communicating effectively and working toward common goals consistently. In addition, the site is receiving follow up assistance designed to better identify and prevent more conditions that generate complaints.

TJJD also notes that 4 of 7 safety complaints in state operations were "founded" during the second quarter, and one location, Evins, had 3 of the 5 safety complaints in state operations registered during second quarter. A transition in leadership personnel is underway at that facility, and the facility is receiving significant support from TJJD's most senior staff.

OIO data on the number of inquiries and referrals includes striking differences between state operations and county post-adjudicated operations which are worthy of further exploration. Part of the context must include an observation that the OIO's numbers are a subset of the total inquiries and grievances

processed in both state and county operations. Possible factors affecting the numbers include substantive conditions in each setting and the degree of transparency and support for youth who wish to grieve conditions.

To follow up an issue in last quarter's response, TJJD has been an Association of Psychology Postdoctoral and Internship Centers (APPIC) certified site since 2013. The agency recently participated in its site visit from the American Psychological Association (APA) for accreditation as an APA approved internship. APA should have a determination in April, 2016. Being an APA approved site will attract increasingly capable and higher qualified interns. In the last six years, TJJD has trained sixteen psychology interns, including this year's cohort. Five of them continued employment for their post-doctoral training year, and for this year's group, TJJD has positions for potentially three post-doctoral slots. The new class of interns has been selected for a start date of September 1, 2016. All four internship slots were filled with candidates.

Finally, the table below shows the current status of behavioral/mental health positions in state institutions.

	<b>Case Managers</b>		<b>Social Workers</b>		<b>Health Specialists</b>		<b>Psychologist</b>		<b>Director of Clinical Psychology</b>	
<b>Location</b>	Positions	Filled	Positions	Filled	Positions	Filled	Positions	Filled	Positions	Filled
Evins	16	15			3	3			1	1
Gainesville	27	25*	1	1	5	5			1	1
Giddings	24	20	4	3	7	6	1	1	1	0
Mart – Long Term	24	24	3	3	3	2			1	1
Mart RTC	12	11			7	5			1	1
Mart - Phoenix	3	3			1	1				
Ron Jackson	31	31	1	1	11	11			1	1

\*One Gainesville case manager position is scheduled to begin 5/1/16, bringing the total to 26.

TJJD appreciates the opportunity to respond to the OIO and looks forward to sharing updates on these efforts that continue to move the agency effectively forward.